

Catalogue of American Amphibians and Reptiles.

White, L.R. and R. Powell. 1996. *Celestus agasepsoides*.

Celestus agasepsoides (Thomas)

Diploglossus agasepsoides Thomas, 1971:2. Type-locality, "Barreras, Provincia de Azua, República Dominicana." Holotype, USNM 166964 (original number ASFS V21437), sex unknown, collected on 25 July 1968 by native collectors (not examined by authors).

Sauresia agasepsoides: Strahm and Schwartz, 1977:63.

Celestus agasepsoides: Powell, Henderson, Adler, and Dundee, 1996:64.

• **Content.** No subspecies are recognized.

• **Definition.** *Celestus agasepsoides* is a small (SVL to 71 mm) anguid with a very attenuate habitus, short limbs, 4 digits per limb, and a very long tail (2 or more x SVL); 102-117 scales from mental to vent; 27-29 midbody scale rows; dorsal scales striate and not keeled, lateral and ventral scales with weak striations; an angular subocular between supralabials 5 and 6; 3 scales in the loreal series; widely separated parietals; 8-9 (mode 8) scales in the circumorbital series; and flattened, nontuberculate

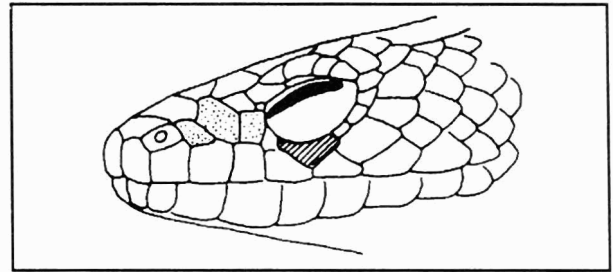


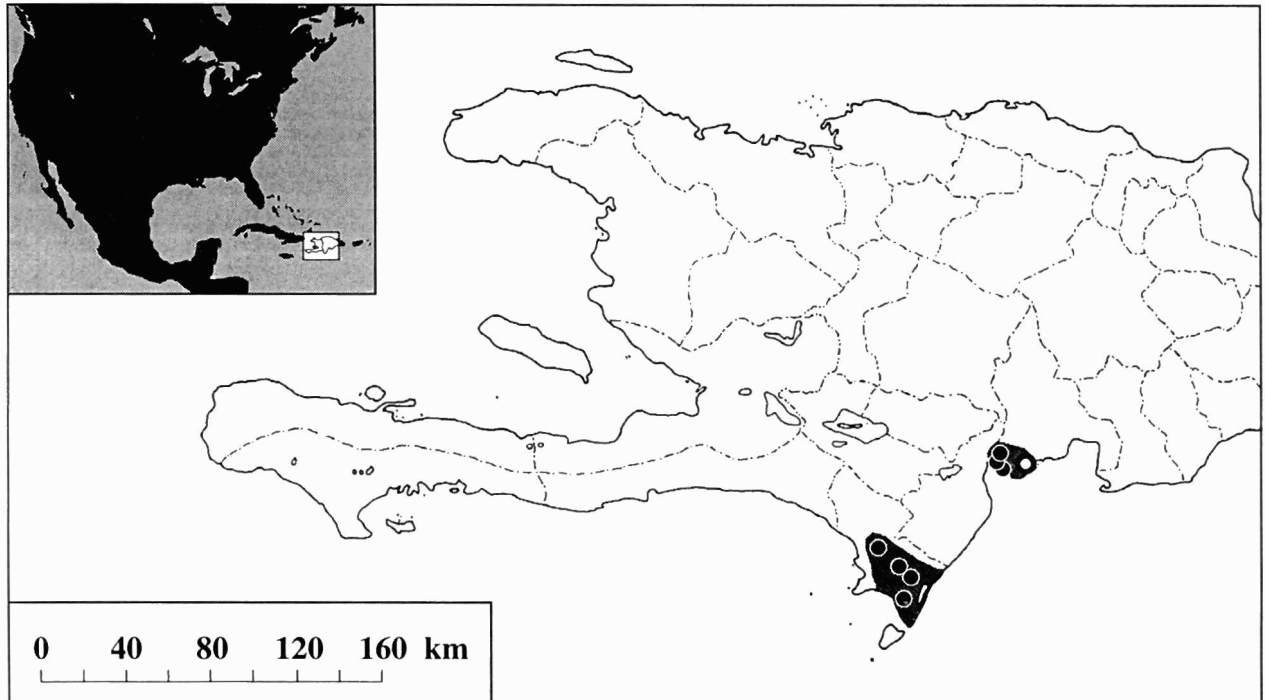
Figure 1. The head of the holotype of *Celestus agasepsoides* (from Thomas, 1971). Stippled scales indicate the "loreal series," crosshatched scale is the angular subocular.

subdigital lamellae (Schwartz and Henderson, 1991).

A pale gray to tan middorsal zone is sharply set off from dark brown sides by dorsolateral lines which extend from the canthus rostralis to the tail. The lateral dark color fades ventrally as pigment is restricted to the centers of scales, resulting in a more or less lineate ventral pattern. The midventral 3-4 scale rows are lightly flecked with dark specks. The upper side of the head is suffused with dark pigment and the infralabial and gular regions are transversely barred. Limbs are dark above, lighter below.



Figure 2. An adult male *Celestus agasepsoides* (Bobby Witcher Memorial Collection, BWMC 04294) from 5.5 km NW Oviedo, Provincia de Pedernales, República Dominicana.



Map. Range of *Celestus agasepsoides* (modified from Schwartz and Henderson, 1991). The large circle marks the type-locality, dots indicate other records. Some dots indicate more than one proximate locality.

• **Diagnosis.** *Celestus agasepsoides* can be distinguished from its Hispaniolan congeners, except *C. sepsoides*, by the combination of having an external ear opening and only 4 toes. From *C. sepsoides*, *C. agasepsoides* may be distinguished by the following combination of characters: 27-29 (versus 32-41) mid-body scale rows; 3 (versus 4) scales in the loreal series; modally fewer scales (8 versus 10) in the circumorbital series; and flattened, nontuberculate (versus distinctly tuberculate) subdigital lamellae; also, the head is shorter relative to SVL, the habitus more slender, size smaller, and the dorsal-lateral contrast in pattern is more distinct (Thomas, 1971).

• **Descriptions.** Descriptions are in Thomas (1971) and Schwartz and Henderson (1991).

• **Illustrations.** A color photograph was included by Powell et al. (1996). Thomas (1971) provided a line drawing of a lateral view of the head of the holotype. Strahm and Schwartz (1977) included a line drawing of an osteoderm.

• **Distribution.** An Hispaniolan endemic, this species has a disjunct range. It is known from xeric lowlands associated with the Sierra Martín García and the lower elevations of that range, and from the lower Península de Barahona. The elevational range is from sea level to 460 m. The range was illustrated by Schwartz and Henderson (1991).

• **Fossil Record.** None.

• **Pertinent Literature.** In addition to the original description, in which Thomas (1971) provided some information on habitat, Schwartz (1980) characterized this species as a South Island invader of the North Island, Schwartz and Henderson (1991) provided information on natural history, and White et al. (1992) described food habits and compared them to those of syntopic *Amphisbaena gonavensis hyporissor* and *Typhlops syntherus*. SEA/DVS (1990) provided an index to habitats in the Dominican Republic. The species is included in checklists and guides by Schwartz and Thomas (1975), Schwartz et al. (1978), Henderson and Schwartz (1984), Henderson et al. (1984), Schwartz and Henderson (1985, 1988), Hedges and Thomas (1989), and Powell et al. (1996).

• **Nomenclatural History.** Most of the confusion around this taxon has centered on its generic allocation. Originally described as *Diploglossus agasepsoides* by Thomas (1971), this species was assigned to the Hispaniolan endemic genus *Sauresia* by Strahm and Schwartz (1977). Based on molecular evidence presented in Hedges et al. (1992) and cited by Hedges (1996), Powell et al. (1996) formally listed this species in the genus *Celestus* for the first time. However, Savage and Lips (1993), based on the presence of sheathed claws, suggested that the species formerly placed in *Sauresia* are derived from *Diploglossus*, and retained the use of *Sauresia*.

• **Etymology.** The name *agasepsoides* is presumably derived from the Greek *aga* (meaning "very") and *sepsoid* (meaning "lizard-like"), possibly in reference to the very elongate habitus of this species.

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